Assessment Committee 11-22-19 NOTES

We 1) had a discussion about the status of assessment, 2) reviewed a drafty sketch of what Dreamy Assessment, Teaching & Learning would look like, and then 3) got into pairs and brainstormed ways to deepen or strengthen existing college commitments to the Dream or new ideas for supporting the Dream.

**DISCUSSION: What is the current state of affairs at the college regarding assessment and things relevant to assessment? What is the current state of our assessment culture?**

* Official response from NWCCU on Mid Cycle report and visit: Rec 2 “resolved” and a new Recommendation about related instruction assessment
* Multiple initiatives and busyness
* The Assessment Committee and DEI seem to be absent in the Academic Elimination and Reduction process
* Guided Pathways plans list what we are doing—tasks—but not intended outcomes
* You hardly hear about teaching and learning in all of the Guided Pathways planning, talk, presentations
* Time and planning are not prioritized
* We’re reifying inequity in systems, not infusing equity in systems
* Curriculum Committee is a slow complicated process; there’s entropy between committees; it’s hard to be an activist
* Complacency about assessment. In my department, adjuncts not involved in teaching and learning improvement work related to assessment
* In my dept, our assessment plan this year focuses on extending the work to all faculty (including PTF)
* Our department faculty are split about value of assessment – as an example, part of the department argued against including assessment in the unit plan
* Assessment culture developed among faculty, but it seems it hasn’t trlcklied up to admin level. There’s talk about assessment but the planning and the work never seems to start with assessment and when assessment is used it seems to be used to support what has already begun or already been decided
* Curriculum review for gen ed is getting attention – pilot project involving Lisa Nett, Elizabeth, and Cultural Literacy assessment team -- potential to help integrate assessment and curriculum review
* Maybe the Assessment Committee should reach out directly to Tim with our observations and concerns
* Connect with folks on service area side and DEI – do they understand the academic assessment work and how to loop in?
* It doesn’t matter if we finish work if it doesn’t have meaning – assessment work (in the past few years) has been a case study in how to focus on meaning
* Might be useful to have a set of agreed upon questions to ask about meaningful assessment in the larger system—institutional level, leadership level (not just program level)
* Our tech systems need to support our values and vision, such as curriculum software
* Does the Assessment Committee need to up our game?
* We should visit other committees and tell them what we’re doing and find out how to connect better to them
* Would be great if the VP meeting was not just informational but was rather a work time when all the committees and groups could do connection, integration, and planning work
* We’re in an individualistic culture…problematic for addressing systems of oppression

**HANDOUT:**

A drafty sketch, based on Assessment Committee readings and discussions

*In the land of Dreamy Assessment, Teaching & Learning…*

Students…

* understand the outcomes they are being challenged to meet and how the curricular and co-curricular provide space to practice and demonstrate their learning
* have adequate opportunities to practice, with clearly defined feedback, as they progress toward meeting learning outcomes
* see the coherence of the curriculum in terms of their own learning
* are actively involved in their own learning and the assessment of/reflection on/feedback on their learning
* are able to bring their diverse experiences to the learning process and engage in learning and assessment in an equitable way

Faculty…

* are meaningfully and collaboratively engaged in assessment as a learning process
* recognize assessment as a professional commitment to teaching and learning
* integrate the assessment process into their regular teaching and learning work
* engage in meaningful conversations about curricula and instruction--conversations that are informed by evidence as much as possible
* use assessment results to inform decisions designed to support student learning
* intentionally support students in learning how to learn, how to reflect on their own learning, and how to give feedback on their learning
* find that assessment is feasible to carry out given program resources and the amount of time faculty members are willing to invest in assessment activities
* have access to regularly scheduled times to discuss, reflect, and act on the assessment process and results
* have access to T&L Center support for implementing adjustments, experiments, and improvements
* collaborate across departments, teams
* help orient new or part-time faculty and staff to SLOs, PLOs, and the assessment process

The College…

* shares an understanding of common learning outcomes: the college community as a whole understands college outcomes, and programs/areas understand their own outcomes and how they relate to the college outcomes
* clearly and broadly communicates intended learning outcomes, assessment processes, assessment results, and improvement efforts
* demonstrates, through leadership communication and decisions, that the college values high quality, evidence-informed teaching and assessment
* provides effective structures, processes, and resources for the professional development and on-going work of faculty, staff, and administration in the areas of assessment, teaching, and learning
* supports, with intentionality, integration, alignment, and collaboration, for example, by supporting integrative learning environments for students and assistance for students in transferring learning from one area to another
* provides effective structures, processes, and resources that support equitable and culturally responsive teaching, learning and assessment practices

**WORKSHEET - We brainstormed ideas for the third column (‘Ways to Deepen of Strengthen”) as well as the last box (“New Practices).**

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| **Kind of Commitment** | **Evidence of Commitment** | **Ways to Deepen or Strengthen** |
| **Institutional Structures** (committees, regularly scheduled retreats, centers, such as teaching and learning centers, regularly scheduled faculty and staff development opportunities, faculty and staff meetings, governance structures, new structures) | Assessment Committee, Mission Fulfillment Committee, Curriculum Committee,ISPD,Assessment Teams | Timing within initiativesOrder of process steps--no more ‘here’s a draft give me feedback’; the “we” that does the design cannot be an exclusive group in a closed roomAssessment as part of College Council, President’s Council, and other admin functionsAll administrative functions need to conduct assessmentSupporting and valuing student diverse learning experiencesCultural grounding-student focus: What is the experience of the student? What does it mean to be student ready?Internal professional development where faculty have meaningful conversations about learningConnecting to other committees...Information sharing across committees - once-a-term shared discussion? Repurpose VP meeting to enable collaboration among groups? |
| **Institutional Processes** (annual personnel reviews, faculty evaluations, approval of programs and courses) | Gen ed course review redesign (in development) | When new initiatives are needed, start with what already isCurriculum system can capture assessment practices/info betterMake meaningful: review vs. ongoing improvement & collaborationCross-departmentalRegarding approval of programs and courses, who is helped and who is left out or hurt?How does approval of programs and courses happen?Constructive criticismFocus on student learning, not teaching (the other superficial stuff would obviously need to be addressed)Integrate assessment lessons into evaluationsDocument workflow: assessment flows into unit plan, automatically enabling linkages |
| **Institutional Decisions** (awards, forms of recognition, promotion and tenure, budgetary decisions, hiring decisions) | Unit planning | Make auto links between assessment with unit planningThe work to become inclusive must be itself inclusiveReal-time transparencyBudgeting and reductions must be written with an informed POV of the college’s goals & priorities = shared understanding!!More money for assessment work to happenRemove names & identifying information from job applicationsHiring committees need to have some understanding/value of assessmentFind out why we are not moving the needle on hiring practices that result in diverse staff & faculty, skilled with assessmentClarify what we mean by assessment results and how to use them |
| **Channels of Communication** (with board, decision and planning bodies, wider public, current and future students, faculty and staff) | Board reports,Updates to Faculty Senate  | Shared meaning, shared understanding; each overlapping project/goal must KNOW of each other--this should come from leadership!; quality (based on shared meaning) not quantity of communicationsFrameworks that build that shared understanding and meaning for communications: here’s what was taken into account; who was involved & why; give context & history; equity-informed communication--remember power dynamics and aim to redistributeMore effective ways of disseminating and collecting information in the style of guided pathways vs cafeteria style (f-drive, committee notes, myriad of meetings, etc.). Guided pathways provides a roadmap to students...we need a roadmap to information. |

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| **Kind of Commitment** | **Evidence of Commitment** | **Ways to Deepen or Strengthen** |
| **Forms of Communication** (public documents, recruitment materials, catalog, website, newsletter, other) |   |  Consistent, easily accessible informationMore effective ways of disseminating and collecting information in the style of guided pathways vs cafeteria style (f-drive, committee notes, myriad of meetings, etc.). Guided pathways provides a roadmap to students...we need a roadmap to information. |
| **Support** (line item from budgets, use or development of technology to collect, store, or record assessment results and interpretations; grant support focused on assessment; human support to help carry out aspects of the process, such as interns) | Assessment Coordinator,Assessment Coaches, pay for PTF time,Annual program reporting and feedback,Docuware (in development) | Technology that tracks curriculum and connects to assessment, learning & growth |
| **Campus Practices** (new student orientation, new faculty orientation; assessment week; celebration of faculty-staff-student work; program- and institution-level times—common times—to focus dialogue on teaching, learning, and assessment and formal institutional times to receive and interpret results of assessment; collaboration across traditional boundaries to explore student learning from multiple lenses) | FYFE,CAP,EFA meetings with Jil & Elizabeth,Coaches working across traditional boundaries (divisions, departments, disciplines) | Leadership more connected to assessment, including doing assessment and having a culture of assessment at the leadership levelElevate the importance of instruction and faculty involvement in college-wide initiatives/efforts |

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| **New Practices** (invent new practices that promote campus commitment to teaching, learning, and assessment)  |  New Curriculum Committee software? Can course reviewers have access to assessment findings on the outcomes that courses are designed to meet?Internal professional development |

*Worksheet adapted from Maki, P. (2010) Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution (2nd ed.). Sterling, VA: Stylus Pub.*